

Agenda for Improvement

Since its founding in 1972, FIPSE's dual mission has been to improve the quality and the accessibility of education beyond the high school level. This year, in keeping with its past, FIPSE eagerly invites creative ideas to ensure that as many students as possible enter and successfully complete postsecondary programs of high quality.

The central challenge, common to postsecondary institutions of all sizes and types, is to provide cost-effective learning opportunities for a larger and more diverse student population. This Agenda highlights some of the important issues accompanying this challenge, and we specifically encourage proposals that address these issues. But we recognize that the Agenda does not identify all the important problems and opportunities facing the postsecondary community. FIPSE welcomes proposals addressing important issues of access and quality not discussed in the Agenda for Improvement; the Agenda is intended to stimulate but not limit the thinking of potential applicants.

The Importance of Innovation

FIPSE grants are intended to provide the seed capital for experiments in educational reform, and the knowledge gained through those experiments should be intended to benefit postsecondary students throughout the country. Are the problems or opportunities you wish to address common to other institutions serving similar student populations? If so, can you design an educational reform project that demonstrates to others an effective new way of responding to those problems? FIPSE's goal is to support implementation of innovative reform ideas, to evaluate how well they work, and to share the lessons learned with the larger postsecondary education community.

Project Summaries

The margins below contain brief summaries of some recent FIPSE projects, offered to suggest the wide range of possible responses to the issues described in the Agenda for Improvement. The summaries are taken from longer descriptions prepared by project directors for FIPSE's Program Book, available online at <http://www.ed.gov/FIPSE>.

As a potential applicant, one of the first things you should do is to investigate how others are responding to similar problems or opportunities. How does your idea compare to common or traditional educational practice? More importantly, how does it compare to the experiments of other leading-edge educational reformers? Your project should be designed to make a unique contribution to the professional community. It does not necessarily have to be a revolutionary or paradigm-shifting reform model, but it should be a significant next step.